

Tennessee Arts Commission Strategic Plan 2014-2019

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The Tennessee Arts Commission

All 50 states have state arts agencies whose responsibility is to increase public access to the arts and work to ensure that every community in America enjoys the cultural, civic, economic and educational benefits of a thriving arts sector.

The Tennessee Arts Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly with the special mandate to stimulate and encourage the presentation of the visual, literary, music and performing arts and to encourage public interest in the cultural heritage of Tennessee.

The mission of the Tennessee Arts Commission is to cultivate the arts for the benefit of all Tennesseans and their communities. Through a variety of investments, the Commission encourages excellence in artistic expression through the state's artists, arts organizations and arts activities. That commitment has expanded through the years to increase access and opportunities for all citizens to participate in the arts.

The Tennessee Arts Commission builds better communities by:

- Investing in Tennessee's nonprofit arts industry to enhance cultural life
- Serving citizens, artists and arts and cultural organizations
- Supporting arts education to increase student outcomes
- Undertaking initiatives that address public needs through the arts

Each year, the Commission helps fund the arts activities of more than 600 organizations and artists in Tennessee. Over the past five years, more than 6,450 grants totaling more than \$30 million have been invested in communities across Tennessee. Arts education is a major focus, both to support a complete and balanced education for Tennessee's children and youth and to grow the arts audiences of the future. Arts education grants and programs enhance academic achievement and contribute to student growth and life-long learning. Through Student Ticket Subsidy grants to schools alone, more than 590,000 students have had an arts experience over past five years.

The Governor appoints the 15 volunteer members of the Tennessee Arts Commission for five-year terms, selecting from among citizens who have demonstrated a vital interest in the arts.

Recommended by the Commission to the Governor for appointment, the Executive Director is the lead administrative officer, responsible for engaging a professional staff to carry out the work of the agency.

Our Foundations

MISSION STATEMENT

To cultivate the arts for the benefit of all Tennesseans and their communities

CORE VALUES

Principles that will govern our actions

- ∞ Excellence – We seek artistic and operational integrity in all that we do.
- ∞ Customer focus – We provide the best service at the lowest possible cost.
- ∞ Access – We are inclusive and fair.
- ∞ Innovation - We encourage creativity and initiative.

LEADERSHIP TOOLS

- ∞ **Grant making** that strategically responds to constituent needs and maximizes public benefit
- ∞ **Technical assistance** to build organizational knowledge and skills by sharing best practices
- ∞ **Convening, facilitating and network building** to make connections for mutual benefit, to advance the field and to create public value
- ∞ **Partnerships** to expand capacity and leverage resources
- ∞ **Technological** solutions to increase efficiency and accessibility
- ∞ **Research** to inform effective decision making, operations and advocacy
- ∞ **Communications** to magnify understanding and impact
- ∞ **Public recognition** for artists and organizations
- ∞ **Best practice modeling** to lead by example

GOALS

1. **Thriving Tennessee Arts and Culture** -
2. **Arts as Engines of Growth and Vitality**
3. **Arts Essential to Learning**
4. **A Champion for the Arts**
5. **Effective and Accountable Agency**

STATE LAW

Tennessee Code Annotated 4-20-104 & 107 provide that the duties of the Tennessee Arts Commission are to:

- *stimulate and encourage throughout the state the study and presentation of the performing, visual and literary arts and public participation therein;*
- *encourage participation in, appreciation of, and education in the arts to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state;*
- *encourage public interest in the cultural heritage of our state, to expand the state's cultural resources and to promote the use of art in the state government's activities and facilities;*
- *encourage excellence and assist freedom of artistic expression essential for the well-being of artists.*
- *undertake to assure equitable participation by the traditionally underserved and underrepresented ethnic minority, people with a disability, elderly and rural artists and arts organizations.*

Extensive, Inclusive Planning Process

The 2014-2019 strategic plan builds on extensive input from stakeholders and the public and includes mission, values, tools and five major goals for a long range future. Strategies reflect a more immediate timeframe and will be updated over the years as conditions change and new opportunities emerge. The official period for the plan is November 1, 2014 through September 30, 2019.

Planning methods

- Weekly planning meetings over the course of 18 months
- Listening tour, including meetings in Memphis, Jackson, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Tri-Cities
- Stakeholder conversations with the Governor and First Lady, arts constituents, foundations, local officials, community leaders, and state agencies for education, health, tourism and economic and community development and film and music.
- Legislator conversations with the Lt. Governor, House Speaker, finance and transportation committee chairs, Arts Caucus chairman and all members of the Tennessee Arts Caucus.
- Planning process development with Center for Nonprofit Management
- Alignment review with key partner missions and goals
- Commission planning sessions with National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA)
- Survey of 1,450 artists, arts educators and arts and cultural organizations with strong response rate
- Commission member interviews with local business and community leaders
- More than 30 focus groups with educators, arts constituents and non-arts groups
- Four regional public meetings with participation of more than 450 citizens
 - ∞ November 20, 2013 -- General Shale Brick Natural History Museum Visitor Center and Fossil Site, Gray, TN
 - ∞ November 21, 2013 – Bessie Smith Cultural Center, Chattanooga, TN
 - ∞ December 4, 2013 – Nashville Children’s Theatre, Nashville, TN
 - ∞ January 13, 2014 – STAX Museum of American Soul Music, Memphis, TN
- Multiple internal meetings to assimilate feedback and draft goals, objectives and strategies
- Public review and comments on 2014-2019 plan draft
- Rollout at statewide conference on October 28-30, 2014 at Montgomery Bell State Park in Burns, TN.

Public meeting data and survey results are available at http://www.tn.gov/arts/strategic_plan.htm

Our Realities

Great Arts Assets. Tennessee's artistic heritage and cultural assets are among the richest in the nation. Tennessee's artists--representing performing arts, music, visual arts, literary arts and folk arts--help define who we are as a state. The creative sector is an important part of Tennessee's economy. Tennessee's nationally recognized arts education models increase student outcomes. Tennessee's specialty license plate program in support of the arts is an important factor because it currently funds the majority of the commission's arts investments and programming for schools and communities.

Music is an area of special strength. From Bristol's *Birthplace of Country Music* to Nashville's *Country Music Hall of Fame* to Memphis' *Blues Foundation*, Tennessee lays claim to a remarkable creative bedrock of American traditional and popular music. Tennessee boasts nearly two dozen legendary National Heritage Fellowship Awardees from Bill Monroe to the Fairfield Four and Earl Scruggs. National Medal of Arts music winners from Tennessee include the Fisk Jubilee Singers, Dolly Parton, George Jones, Johnny Cash, Minnie Pearl, B.B. King and Roy Acuff. Tennessee is the only state to choose "Musical Heritage" as its U.S. Mint icon. The state tourism department defines the state's brand as music and aims to position Tennessee as "a global music destination."

Arts Benefit Tennessee. Arts benefit individuals, communities, neighborhoods, and the economic development of cities and regions. Arts play a role in improved student attendance, academic achievement and 21st century skills, in the development of individual self-expression and self-confidence, and in the overall quality of life for people of all ages. At the local level, the arts enhance community pride, identity and connectedness while contributing to real estate development, increased sales and property tax revenues and improved public facilities. The arts build tolerance and understanding among diverse groups of people. On a larger scale, the arts have a major impact on cities and their regions in Tennessee. The arts help attract retirees, recruit employees and grow and retain talented people for the long term.

Uneven Spread. With Tennessee's sprawling geography, urban/rural differences and regional distinctions within the three grand divisions, the arts organizational infrastructure is spread unevenly across the state and across communities. Many Tennesseans have fewer arts opportunities because of where they live, their socio-economic or disability status, ethnicity or age. Local and area arts networks also vary in capacity and reach.

Population Shifts. By 2040, the state's population is projected to increase by 25% and, like the rest of the nation, is both rapidly aging and becoming more diverse. Tennessee currently has the 3rd fastest growing Latino population in the nation. By 2040, Nashville will be the most ethnically diverse city in the South, with a Latino population of 33% in addition to Lao, Kurdish (the largest in the nation) and Sudanese communities, among other groups (Nashville Next). This demographic influx is changing the state's historic mix of Native American, African American and European American cultural expression.

Public Environment. Tennessee's state leaders value low taxes and a business-friendly environment to foster continued job growth. State government weathered the economic downturn better than many

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states through conservative fiscal management. Even so, the drop in consumer spending, not yet rebounded to pre-recession levels, has hurt a state reliant on sales tax, and austerity measures continue in spite of recent economic gains. Tennessee communities face compelling needs related to jobs, education, health and public safety. These are the overall priorities of state government.

Education Environment. Bipartisan determination to improve the state's rating in K-12 achievement drives Tennessee's First to the Top, Common Core, and arts commission initiatives, which include 2 U.S. Department of Education funded arts integration programs, statewide teacher training, an annual arts education conference and incentive grants. Arts Education is an area of great challenges, great accomplishments and great opportunities.

Arts Environment. While participation and interest in the arts is on the rise, the financial environment for most artists and arts organizations continues to be challenging, especially for smaller and newer organizations. Fundraising, advocacy and audience development are the biggest challenges for arts organizations. Many local leaders still consider the arts separate from the economic, business and civic life of their communities. The arts are often an under-utilized public strategy to meet critical community needs.

State Arts Agency. The Tennessee Arts Commission has an engaged volunteer governing board, a professional staff and an approach that includes brokering partner relationships and strategic leveraging of assets, including technology. Current revenues are stagnant or decreasing. The grants process needs streamlining and the agency brand needs updating.

The challenge and great opportunity of these times is to reposition the arts and the Tennessee Arts Commission as highly valued partners for strong Tennessee communities. The following goals, objectives and strategies were developed toward that end.

Grantees' Top Priorities for the Tennessee Arts Commission

1. Provide Funding
2. Foster Arts in Schools
3. Advocate for the Arts

GOAL 1. Thriving Tennessee Arts and Culture –

Tennesseans make art. That art helps us understand who we are, how we experience our lives and what we want to pass along to generations to come. Thriving Tennessee arts and culture means diverse arts and cultural activities, widespread participation, and ongoing sustained support for arts and culture infrastructures, as well as preservation of our unique heritage and traditions. Flourishing communities include a variety of opportunities for citizens of all ages and walks of life to take part in arts and cultural activities.

1. Invest in arts and cultural assets as an integral part of everyday life for Tennesseans.

- a. Leverage investments in operating support for eligible arts organizations to increase opportunities for all.
- b. Promote the professional development of artists.
- c. Support arts activities for community benefit.

2. Preserve and promote Tennessee's heritage, cultural diversity and folk arts.

- a. Identify, document and promote Tennessee folk artists, community traditions, folklife practices and traditional arts, including both older rooted traditions and those of more recent ethnic and immigrant communities.
- b. Increase public awareness of and scholarly access to the wealth of Tennessee folklife program archival records.

3. Expand accessibility, participation, and inclusion in the arts for all Tennesseans.

- a. Define opportunities and target support for underserved communities.
- b. Research and share best practices for audience development, including underserved communities.
- c. Increase arts participation opportunities, including for persons with disabilities.

4. Foster innovation and excellence.

- a. Share and propel best practices to strengthen the arts and artists in Tennessee.
- b. Encourage and incentivize resilience and adaptability to changes in the environment.

GOAL 2.Arts as Engines of Growth and Vitality

Tennessee's creative people, institutions and businesses help define our communities as vibrant places to live and work. Definitions of the creative economy vary, but together, our creative enterprises and workforce add significant value to the state's economy and Tennessee communities. The Tennessee Arts Commission has a unique relationship with nonprofit arts and cultural organizations that make up a key sector of Tennessee's creative economy.

The 2012 National Governors Association report "New Engines of Growth: Arts, Culture and Design" describes five ways the arts can contribute to economic growth, including:

1. Provide a fast-growth, dynamic industry cluster;
2. Help mature industries become more competitive;
3. Provide the critical ingredients for innovative places;
4. Catalyze community revitalization; and
5. Deliver a better-prepared workforce.

Creative placemaking is an area of special opportunity for Tennessee communities. In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to build shared understanding of culture and community.

The national nonpartisan Urban Institute states that "a healthy place to live includes opportunities for the arts, culture and creative expression." In addition to economic benefits, the Tennessee Arts Commission can highlight the everyday role of the arts in generating other public benefits for communities including community cohesion and pride, increased public health and safety, successful strategies to address tough community problems, and celebration of the essential virtues and values that make us who we are as Tennesseans.

1. Advance the arts as a driver of the creative economy and creative place-making.

- a. Document the impact of Tennessee's creative economy.
- b. Be a catalyst for creative placemaking initiatives in Tennessee communities.
- c. Support Tennessee's brand as an international music destination.
- d. Continue to invest in arts and cultural assets that draw visitors to Tennessee communities.

2. Strengthen civic engagement and community vitality through the arts.

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- a.** Incentivize social transformation and community sustainability through the arts.
- b.** Recognize the importance of community-driven amateur and informal arts-making for community vitality.

GOAL 3.Arts Essential to Learning

The 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that Tennessee is the fastest growing state in the country for academic improvement. The Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education identifies priorities to continue this growth, including the transition to Common Core State Standards, effective school leadership and great teaching, an increased focus on career education and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and career education and increased use of technology.

Arts education can contribute to this growth by supporting learning both in and through the arts. Dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts are academic subjects with rigorous state and national achievement standards. National studies show that arts education builds creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving skills—preparing students for 21st century success in school, work and life.

Learning through the arts is equally beneficial when the arts are integrated into other subject areas, encouraging classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists to develop collaborative lesson plans that infuse creativity into learning. A national sample of 25,000 students showed that those with high levels of arts learning earned higher grades and scored better on standardized tests than others, regardless of their socioeconomic status. The Commission's Arts360 and Value Plus Schools arts integration programs have shown that students not only score higher on tests, but the entire school culture changes to support growth.

Current state law includes instructional requirements for arts education, a fine arts requirement for high school graduation, and licensure requirements for arts teachers. However, teachers report that competing priorities, decreased instructional time, insufficient personnel, and budget and/or space constraints are challenges for arts education in schools.

The Tennessee Arts Commission seeks to address these challenges through strategies that bring together educators, artists, and community partners to recognize the arts as essential to learning in a variety of instructional settings from the classroom to the community and beyond.

1. Foster arts education for all Tennessee children and youth.

- a. Work to assure that every public school student has access to high quality arts education in school.
- b. Strengthen alliances of arts, education and community leaders to address arts education policy and practice.
- c. Support arts specialists and teaching artists as integral to arts learning.

2. Increase capacity of educators and artists to engage the arts to boost student outcomes.

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- a.Support and promote arts integration initiatives.
- b.Foster 21st century learning skills through the arts.
- c.Facilitate professional development for teachers and artists.

3. Facilitate innovative community arts learning for life-long learners, PK-12 out-of-school time and underserved populations.

- a. Foster targeted community education initiatives and partnerships to reach diverse populations.
- b. Cultivate high quality arts education in Tennessee's arts and cultural organizations.

GOAL 4. A Champion for the Arts

In public meetings across the state, business and civic leaders, developers, and philanthropists described how the arts have been essential strategies to moving their communities forward. Even so, only 33% of Tennessee artists and arts organizations perceive that the arts “have a seat at the table” for major community initiatives. The focus of this goal is to increase understanding so that state and local leaders routinely engage the arts to address priority issues and arts organizations and artists across Tennessee become highly valued partners for building strong communities.

1. Communicate the impact of the arts.

- a. Cultivate data and information collection to document public value of arts organizations, activities and experiences.
- b. Create communication tools that build awareness of the public benefits of the arts.

2. Build understanding of the importance of public funding for the arts, including the state’s specialty license plate program.

- a. Articulate the role and significance of public funding for the arts and culture in Tennessee.
- b. Develop and implement specialty license plate marketing campaigns that will build awareness of the program and increase growth, including a gift voucher program.

3. Inform public policy development relative to the arts.

- a. Support Tennesseans for the Arts and other statewide, regional and local arts service organizations.
- b. Increase understanding of the value and role the arts can play in building sustainable communities.

GOAL 5. Effective and Accountable Agency

In step with other Tennessee state agencies, the Tennessee Arts Commission shares a commitment to Customer Focused Government. The objective is to provide the best service at the lowest possible cost.

The Tennessee Arts Commission, governed by a body of 15 members, operates within the complex environment of state and federal laws, rules, policies and procedures. The Commission seeks to fulfill its responsibilities and enhance systems for empowering arts and cultural organizations to implement both Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Accomplishing tasks properly and on time, no matter how big or small, requires well-designed systems, organizational agility and skilled staff. An effective agency must attract, develop and retain qualified professionals to lead the field .

1. Enhance customer focus, efficiency and stewardship.

- a. Reduce the cost of doing business, including streamlining the grants process.
- b. Support good stewardship of agency resources.

2. Maximize return on public investment.

- a. Develop partnerships to leverage resources, including with other state agencies.
- b. Review and redesign agency evaluation methods to capture benefit of investments and to make strategic and process improvements.

3. Strengthen the agency as a leader for innovation and excellence.

- a. Help staff excel through professional development opportunities.
- b. Translate research and emerging trends into innovative programming for the arts.